

Tips, Tactics & Takeaways for Apple iOS17

By John Wordock, Executive Editor/SVP, Cumulus Podcast Network

The Sum-Up: What Happened to My Downloads?

- Apple throttled down on automatic downloads under iOS17 to address storage issues with the podcast app on iPhones
- Listeners will no longer get ALL UNPLAYED EPISODES when they un-pause auto-downloading and return to your podcast
- Back-catalog episodes will see their downloads suffer, but more recent episodes within the 30-to-60-day release window should not
- Who's hurt the most? Frequent publishers. Shows with large back catalogs. Shows with heavy exposure to Apple
- Apple expects heaviest download erosion in December and January as consumers set up their new iPhones and adopt iOS17
- You should expect strong download erosion short-term, but longer term you will get a more accurate view of who's listening to your podcast

Tips and Tactics: Turn Your Passive Fans into Active Listeners

- Use call-to-actions by the host to promote your podcast as appointment listening; e.g. "If you love this show, make sure you check back when we drop episodes every Monday and Thursday."
- Write timely episode titles to help boost discoverability since episode titles are the second most important element for search on Apple after your show's name
- Tell listeners to practice the Three R's: Rate, Review, Recommend
- Share your Apple vanity link across social media, newsletters, websites
- Embrace YouTube. The world's second largest search engine after Google is here to stay as a podcast platform so establish your presence there
- Open new frontiers and share links for Spotify and Amazon Music

- Create vertical video clips for YouTube Shorts, TikTok, and Instagram Reels, and promote every episode with a short promotional video

Key Takeaways:

- Apple Podcasts has made changes under iOS17, but that doesn't mean your show has lost value for advertisers or for listeners
- Recruiting new followers on any platform - not just Apple - is more important than ever so promote your podcast frequently and aggressively
- Crafting the best content possible is still Job #1. Perfect each episode so listeners feel rewarded for investing their time when they listen
- This rightsizing of download data will cause short-term pain, but longer-term develop more accurate data as downloads and listening align more closely
- If you're launching a new podcast, make sure you promote your show heavily during the standard release window (the first 30 to 60 days) because you can no longer rely on large download numbers from back-catalog listening
- If you're creating a new podcast, consider publishing your content using an existing RSS feed since you have existing followers there
- If you're launching a limited run series, consider clustering your episodes within a 30-day window since you cannot rely on back-catalog listening
- Just remember: These download declines are industry-wide. You are not alone!